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New York

President Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 35

Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Report of the Secretary-General (A/55/172 and Add.1)

Draft resolution (A/55/L.7)

Mr. Ling (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus welcomes Ambassador Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. The presence of the head of Cuba's diplomatic corps confirms the importance of the issue being discussed in today's plenary meeting.

Despite the fact that the General Assembly considers this issue every year, we cannot fail to recognize the special nature of such a discussion in the context of this Millennium Assembly. All the recent debates at the United Nations on this issue show the growing wave of protest against unilateral coercive economic measures applied for political purposes.

At the fifty-fourth session the Republic of Belarus, together with the overwhelming majority of States, voted in support of resolution 54/21, of 9 November 1999, on the "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". Belarus thus confirmed its adherence to the principle of respect for the fundamental principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade and navigation.

Belarus has consistently advocated the revocation of laws and measures that have been applied and are being applied on a unilateral basis against Member States. The extraterritorial consequences of these actions affect the sovereignty of other States, the lawful interests of their subjects or of other persons under their jurisdiction, and freedom of trade and navigation.

In accordance with the fundamental principles of international law, including the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, Belarus has never applied, will not apply and has no intention of applying any laws or measures of this kind. Belarus believes that international disputes must be settled by negotiation on the basis of respect for the principles of equality and mutual interest.

The Government of my country is convinced that all the necessary basic conditions are in place for a gradual settlement of the dispute between the United States of America and Cuba. We call on both parties to step up their efforts to this end.

Mr. Mra (Myanmar): For the ninth successive year the General Assembly is debating the question of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. In this connection, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation of the Secretary-General's report.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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In the final document of the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the member States condemned the continued unilateral application of coercive economic and other measures against a number of developing countries, and called on States not to recognize such acts. They also called on States to refrain from adopting or implementing similar coercive measures, such as the Helms-Burton and D'Amato-Kennedy Acts.

Similarly, the South Summit underlined the necessity for developed countries to eliminate laws and regulations with adverse extraterritorial effects and other forms of unilateral economic coercive measures that are inconsistent with the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and principles of the multilateral trade system.

In each of the past eight years the General Assembly, by an overwhelming majority, has called on States to refrain from promulgating and applying laws that have extraterritorial effects.

My delegation regrets that, despite numerous appeals and resolutions of the General Assembly, the United States has not yet found it possible to bring to an end these unilateral measures that continue to severely affect the socio-economic situation in Cuba. We have noted with interest limited measures taken by the United States to further increase humanitarian contacts with Cuba, partially liberalizing regulations regarding deliveries of medicine and foodstuffs, and allowing charter flights between Cuba and the United States. However, my delegation has learned with much regret that most of these selective measures have not actually contributed to easing the ban, but, rather, reimpose the complex legislative framework that makes up the embargo.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States Government against Cuba continued with serious consequences for the social and economic situation of Cuba throughout 1999 and the first half of 2000. The embargo and related legislation are a major obstacle to the recovery of the Cuban economy and have consequently impeded the normal functioning of social activities, affecting the living conditions of the Cuban population.

My delegation is strongly opposed to the unjust application of measures such as the Toricelli Act, the Helms-Burton Act and other embargo regulations, and we call for the ending of the embargo. Myanmar is of the view that the promulgation and application by Member States of laws and regulations whose extraterritoriality affects the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction, and freedom of trade and navigation violate the universally adopted principles of international law.

In the interest of upholding the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, the delegation of Myanmar, consistent with its stand in previous years, will vote in favour of draft resolution A/55/L.7.

Mr. Mangachi (United Republic of Tanzania): As on many previous occasions, the United Republic of Tanzania is addressing the Assembly on this agenda item to call for the lifting of the embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. Tanzania regrets that, despite numerous appeals from the podium and resolutions of this Assembly, the United States has not yet found it possible to bring to an end the unilateral measures it imposed on the people and Government of Cuba. We particularly regret that those measures have caused such undue suffering to the Cuban people that last year even Pope John Paul II was moved to make a special plea on their behalf. That plea and the appeals we have made continue to drive our sense of urgency in seeking justice for the people of Cuba. Recent limited measures of relaxation remain far short of what needs to be done — that is, the termination of the entire spectrum of sanctions imposed on the Cuban people.

In our view, normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba is also in the interest of the peoples and Governments of the two countries, in spite of their different ideological inclinations. The existing conflict is a product of the cold war, which has since been defused. It is our hope that as we enter the new millennium the relics of the cold war can be buried once and for all.

The so-called Helms-Burton Act is legislation which has been rejected by the Assembly, the Non-Aligned Movement and others. The extraterritorial applicability of that legislation cannot be condoned by the international community. It infringes on the principles of the Charter of this Organization regarding the sovereign equality of all Member States, just as it violates the principle of freedom of trade and navigation.

It is our hope that the United States will heed the pleas made in the General Assembly imploring it to engage Cuba in a dialogue, with a view to ending the embargo and normalizing relations between the two countries. This would not only be in the best interests of the peoples of the two nations, but would also serve the international community as a whole.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) *(spoke in Spanish)*: The purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law are the invariable standard of conduct that govern Mexico's relations with other States, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Mexican Republic.

With deep conviction and a sense of history, my country has always rejected the unilateral imposition of coercive measures in international relations.

Mexico is committed to respect for the inalienable rights of all States to choose their own economic system, as well as their political, social and cultural system, in accordance with the will of their peoples. For this reason, Mexico has neither enacted nor applied any laws with extraterritorial effects. My Government reiterates that instruments that run counter to the sovereignty of other nations, such as the so-called Helms-Burton Act, are unacceptable in the light of international law and are contrary to the purposes and principles to which we all committed ourselves in approving the San Francisco Charter.

Over the past eight years an overwhelming majority of the General Assembly has urged Member States to abstain from enacting and applying laws with extraterritorial effects. Today we shall do so for the ninth time.

This appeal by the international community, based on reason, law and ethics, should not continue to be ignored. Compliance is required for the harmony that should prevail among all States, based on full respect for the sovereignty of each nation and our commitments under international law.

We cannot forget that the embargo against Cuba has a negative effect on the persistent efforts made by the Cuban people for more than 40 years to achieve well-being; it also has adverse consequences on the most vulnerable sectors of society, such as children, women and the elderly.

The embargo against Cuba must end. We need to overcome this unpleasant intolerance unconditionally and without delay, since only by uniting and recognizing our differences, enriched by our diversity and through frank but respectful dialogue, will we be able to translate into reality the hopes of the founders of our Organization and achieve a fully humane world, based on our shared aspirations for peace, justice, equality and freedom.

Mexico will continue to foster a high degree of cooperation and economic and commercial trade with Cuba, a nation with which we are joined in history, geography and culture, as well as our irrevocable will to build our own national destiny on a free and sovereign basis.

In accordance with our unwavering principled position, the delegation of Mexico will, as in the past eight years on similar draft resolutions, vote for the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.7.

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam): Over the last eight years the General Assembly has adopted numerous resolutions requesting the United States of America to put an immediate end to the policies of economic, commercial and financial embargo and blockade imposed upon the Republic of Cuba. It is of grave concern to many countries, Viet Nam in particular, that no effort has been made to heed these earnest appeals. The embargo and blockade continue to cause serious hardship and damage to Cuba and suffering to its people.

Viet Nam firmly believes that these inhuman policies must be abolished once and for all. Healthy international relations can be built only on the basis of equality amongst States, non-discrimination of political systems and respect for the right of every nation to choose its own way of development. In this connection, we are of the view that the differences between the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba should be solved through dialogue and negotiations on the basis of the principles of respect for each other's national independence and sovereignty and of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. In this line, we welcome every effort of the parties concerned to that effect.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reaffirm our country's full support for and cooperation and solidarity with the Cuban people and Government. We hope that this year the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution with greater support and thus reject

in a categorical voice the policies of unilateral embargo against the Republic of Cuba.

The President: I call on Mr. Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.7.

Mr. Pérez Roque (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have come to speak on behalf of the only country on the planet subjected to a blockade. I represent a friendly and courageous nation that has earned the respect of international public opinion for its steadfast, determined struggle for independence and its defence of the right of small, poor countries to take their place in the world.

On behalf of Cuba, I hereby submit to the General Assembly for consideration the draft resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

I do not feel it necessary to repeat how, when and why the United States blockade against Cuba was put in place or the methods by means of which it has been reinforced and strengthened every year. Nor do I believe it fitting to reveal once again the countless pretexts by which the representatives of the United States Government have unsuccessfully sought to justify the unjustifiable year after year. This Assembly has enough information on the issue and has clearly supported the need to put an end to this irrational, inhumane policy for eight consecutive years.

However, I am particularly interested in stating that, contrary to what has been repeated with suspicious persistence, the economic, trade and financial blockade against Cuba has not only not been eased as a result of the recent legislative decisions adopted by the United States Congress, but has indeed been further tightened.

How has that been possible, one may wonder, since — after seven months of an exemplary struggle for the return of the child Elián González to his family in Cuba — no one any longer disputes the fact that the overwhelming majority of people in the United States, the press, an ever-increasing sector of the Cuban-born community in the United States, businesspeople in this country and even a large number of members of Congress are demanding an end to the blockade against Cuba? How could the powerful, extremist minority in the Cuban-born community that benefits from the blockade and its allies in the Republican congressional leadership impose their dark designs despite the fact that Capitol Hill has already seen six votes overwhelmingly in favour of changing the policy towards Cuba?

On 5 August 1999, the Senate adopted the so-called Ashcroft Amendment, which would have allowed the sale of food and medicine to Cuba, by 70 votes in favour to 28 against. However, the Republican leadership, in collusion with Miami-based anti-Cuban sectors, managed to remove it from the final text of the bill by resorting to pressures and outrageously anti-democratic practices.

On 23 March 2000, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee once again adopted the Ashcroft Amendment by consensus.

On 10 May 2000, the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives adopted the Nethercutt Amendment — aimed at allowing the sale of food and medicine to Cuba — by 35 votes in favour to 24 against. This bill, too, was never discussed on the House floor.

On 20 July 2000, the Dorgan-Gorton Amendment — similar in purpose to the previous initiatives — was adopted by the Senate by 79 votes in favour to 13 against.

That same day, two other significant votes took place in the House of Representatives. The Sanford Amendment — which would have enabled Americans freely to travel to Cuba — was adopted by 232 votes in favour to 186 against. The Moran Amendment, authorizing the sale of food and medicine to Cuba, passed by 301 votes in favour to 116 against.

Given these precedents, was it not logical to imagine that real change was imminent in the arbitrary policy that the United States has imposed on Cuba for over 40 years? And yet, the Republican leadership and Cuban-American congressional representatives not only managed to prevent these proposals from being included — in violation of the rules of the United States legislative process — but they also managed to impose other amendments that actually reinforce the blockade against Cuba. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate were later forced to adopt the poorly drafted plan because legislators were deprived of any opportunity to discuss or to change these new amendments. Finally, on 28 October, the

United States President signed the bill, thus codifying into law new measures tightening the blockade against Cuba, although he had stated previously:

> "I hope I'm wrong, but what I've been told is that the embargo on food and medicines has been allegedly eased — although it probably won't do much because it doesn't offer any credits or financing facilities, which we give to poor countries. Besides, it definitely restrains the ability of the Executive to enhance the people-to-people contacts between Americans and Cubans, thus further punishing and increasing the hardships of the Cuban people. Certainly, this agreement is restrictive.
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> "I think that in a thoroughly unjustified manner it restricts the United States ability to make decisions on the policy of travels ... I think it's incorrect ...
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> "I can't believe that the majority supports this and I think it was a big mistake."

I think we must tell the truth frankly and openly: the apparent authorization for United States companies to sell food and medicines to Cuba is established under such restrictions and obstacles that those activities are rendered impossible in practice.

Can the sale of food and medicines to Cuba be possible if the complex, bureaucratic licence-granting process for such transactions — expressly devised to render them impossible — remains in force? Is it possible if any kind of sales-related Government assistance and even private financing are prohibited? Is it possible if Cuban-made products cannot be imported as payment? How can Cuba purchase food and medicines from the United States if maritime and air transport between the two countries is still banned? Is it possible if direct relations between United States and Cuban banking institutions are not allowed? Is it possible if, inter alia, there are such absurd prohibitions in place as the one preventing Cuba from using the United States dollar in its foreign trade transactions?

But that is not all. Why do we also say that the blockade has been intensified? Not only is the sale of food and medicines to Cuba still hindered, but from now on — for the first time ever in these four decades — United States citizens are expressly barred under law from freely travelling to Cuba. Until now, authorizing such travel was a prerogative of the President. It has ceased to be so. No United States President will be able to make a decision in that respect unless it is approved by Congress.

If there are still any doubts, here are two enlightening statements.

A Republican Congresswoman from Florida, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, one of the masterminds behind the kidnapping of the Cuban child, stated about the legislation adopted, that it was just smoke and mirrors and that they had obtained a tremendous victory in freezing the ban preventing United States tourists from going to Cuba.

Another Republican Congressman from Florida, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, a close ally and kinsman of the Miami-based Cuban-born terrorist groups, gloated that it was the most important victory since the Helms-Burton Act. No barter trade, no granting of credits, no imports from Cuba, no public or private financing. "The denial of credits and tourism to [Cuba] is an extraordinarily important victory".

Anyone can understand that those responsible for intensifying the blockade against my country have also attempted to cynically deceive international public opinion. It is necessary to provide another clarification: over and over, the United States Government cites the authorization of donations to Cuba amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars per year in humanitarian aid. I can confirm that this is absolutely false. Actually, donations to Cuba from United States non-governmental and religious organizations have averaged some $4 million per year. I think it is important to emphasize that such donations — usually prepared in open defiance of the constraints, obstacles and persecutions imposed by the Federal Government — are an unmistakable testimony to the spirit of solidarity and the sensitivity of many of the best and most honest of the American people.

As if everything I have just said to this Assembly were not enough, I must now warn against the new aggression committed by the United States against Cuba. Last 28 October the United States President signed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act. Under this Act, the Government is authorized to appropriate $161 million in funds belonging to Cuban enterprises and banks that are frozen in United States banks. It also sets out the right to such pillaging in the future should any transactions be carried out once the blockade is lifted.

This money will be handed over to Miami-based terrorist groups and their lawyers under the pretext of compensating the relatives of the pilots of one of these terrorist organizations who died when engaged in one of the many acts of provocation against Cuba, jeopardizing the life of innocent people and air traffic in the area. The United States Government is well aware of how that unfortunate incident happened and who is really responsible for it.

This new action is another escalation in the policy of aggression against Cuba, and it sets a negative international precedent that will most certainly cause new problems in the future. Cuba reiterates to this Assembly its determination to stand up to this new aggression, and it remains steadfastly committed to enforcing the recent provisions adopted by our Government in response to the United States legislative perversion.

The General Assembly of the United Nations did not abandon Cuba in the tough years when, in addition to its own hardships, it had to face the economic war that the United States stepped up when it believed that the time had come to launch the final attack on my country. While the United States toughened its blockade with unprecedented cruelty, Cuba received increasing solidarity and support from the General Assembly. However, while year after year a larger number of members of the Assembly asked the United States to change its policy, those repeated appeals were disregarded with imperial arrogance.

When in 1992 the Torricelli Act was enacted, 59 members of the General Assembly voted against the blockade for the first time. This Act, which is still in force, prohibited, inter alia, trade between Cuba and the subsidiaries of United States companies based in third countries and seriously hindered international maritime transportation. Also in 1992, President Bush stated that his Administration would continue to exert pressure on all the Governments of the world regarding the need to isolate Castro's regime economically.

When in 1993 the United States declared that as a condition for receiving economic assistance countries must end all economic relations with Cuba — a further expansion of the extraterritorial scope of the blockade — 88 States called in the Assembly for an end to that policy.

When in 1994 the United States increased its aggressive radio broadcasts against my country, banned the sending of remittances, food parcels and medicines to Cuba, and restricted family-related travel between the two countries, with the aim — stated by the Treasury Department — of further tightening the embargo on Cuba and thereby limiting the capacity of the Cuban Government to acquire foreign currency, 101 countries voted in the Assembly against that policy.

When in 1995 the General Assembly learned of a tightening of the blockade, with new initiatives to internationalize it being discussed in the United States, 117 countries supported Cuba. Information revealing the tightening included the fact that the only two pacemaker companies, both belonging to third countries, had stopped supplying pacemakers for heart patients in Cuba, one because the devices included American components and the other because it had been bought by a firm based in the United States.

When in 1996 the Helms-Burton Act was passed and President Clinton himself stated that nobody in the world "supports our policy towards Cuba", the General Assembly demanded an end to the blockade, with 137 countries voting in favour.

When in 1997 the United States imposed its conditions on the European Union and prevented the issue of the Cuban blockade from being discussed at the World Trade Organization, while sanctioning companies and businessmen who, in defiance of the blockade, had established relations with Cuba, 143 countries voted in favour of the Cuban resolution in the General Assembly.

When in 1998 the United States Government stepped up its harassment of companies that had maintained relations with our country, and stated that 12 companies from over seven countries were being investigated for their activities in Cuba with a view to imposing sanctions on them, and when the Asociación para la Salud Mundial stated that the embargo had significantly increased suffering in Cuba and that such an embargo violated the most basic international agreements and conventions on human rights, the General Assembly once again condemned the blockade, this time by 157 votes.

When in 1999 international agreements on trademarks and patents were arbitrarily broken in the United States Congress to tighten the blockade, and United States farmers and even the Senate were demanding authorization to sell food and medicines to

Cuba, 158 countries in the Assembly supported ending the blockade against Cuba.

Now we come to the present day. Nobody should be deceived. All the laws adopted against Cuba throughout these years, with irrational hatred and outright disrespect for international law, are still in force.

The next President of the United States should decide whether to persuade Congress to change this outdated policy or to continue to be held hostage to the mean interests and delusions of revenge of an extremist, unscrupulous minority left behind by history.

The current President is perhaps a good case in point. At first he probably wanted to change the situation that he had inherited. However, he will go down in history as the President who could have done so, but was forced to do the precise opposite. After normalizing relations with China and Viet Nam, and even with a group of countries once called "terrorists", when flying to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with which the United States has still not signed a peace agreement, he may ponder his actions towards Cuba. There are men who go down in history for their courage and conviction, shown by their deeds, and there are others who fail to do so due to incapacity or fear.

The President-elect and the new Congress of the United States must decide. In the meantime, Cuba is more determined and optimistic than ever in its decision to continue to be a free nation. It is ready to have normal and respectful relations with the United States, towards whose people it does not feel any hatred or hold any grudges, or to face another century of blockade and acts of aggression. It is not in vain that everybody in my generation and 60 in every 100 Cubans have lived their entire lives under the harsh conditions of the blockade. Our children will also be capable of doing so. Our adherence to man's full independence, freedom and dignity and the thorough enjoyment of human rights, attained 40 years ago for the first time in our history, is far stronger than the sanctions imposed by the blockade.

The Government of the representative of Israel, bound to the United States by ties of mutual complicity, is the only one that for eight consecutive years has voted with the United States against our right to life. But his people who have been persecuted and have been decimated by famine and disease, surely understand and support us. I remind him that our struggle against the blockade, which his country does not condemn, is also in favour of the rights of the Jewish community in Cuba — which enjoys full respect, freedom and consideration in our homeland.

I confess to the representative of the United States Government that I recognize how difficult it must be for him to try to defend, without any justification, the right of his country to kill Cuban children through famine and disease. After the voting, when the United States Ambassador leaves this Hall, he should think about my words to him: "You can inspire terror by force, but never sympathy. You can be the strongest, but not loved or respected. You can impose power, but lack moral authority. You can be the richest, but not the most virtuous. You can lie, but you cannot deceive everybody indefinitely. You can martyr a people but you cannot prevent it from fighting with all its might for the right to freedom and life."

The vote in the Assembly today will not be to settle a bilateral dispute between Cuba and the United States, but to support the validity of principles of international law, the rejection of the extraterritorial implementation of laws, respect for the sovereign equality of States and freedom to engage in international trade and navigation.

On behalf of a people that has not lost its courage and optimism because of invasions, blockades and acts of aggression, whose sons have been willing to fight, teach, build or heal anywhere on earth; on behalf of a people that personally feels every injustice or pain in the world, whose homeland has been mankind; on behalf of a people that now expects, in our country, with justified confidence that this General Assembly will vote again against injustice and in favour of international law, I ask representatives to once again express their support for the effective end of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*spoke in French*): Like the overwhelming majority of Member States of the United Nations, my country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, continues to be concerned about the non-implementation of the provisions of General Assembly resolutions requesting the Government of the United States to lift its economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba. This blockade, imposed since

1960, has lasted too long and has not served the interests of either of the two parties. We believe that it is high time that the blockade was ended, in the interest of peace, stability and cooperation in the region and in the world.

Like many other countries, we regard this blockade as a relic of the old bipolar era that is obstructing the current efforts of the international community to build a new world order based on the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The repeal of this restrictive trade practice would undoubtedly help normalize Cuban-United States relations in general and improve the political climate in the region.

Despite all the efforts to persuade public opinion to the contrary, the blockade, with all its extraterritorial impacts, is in reality being further intensified, aggravating the situation of the Cuban people, in particular of vulnerable groups such as children, women and the elderly.

While economic, trade and other types of cooperation continue to prevail in the relations among the States of the world, is it not sad that the relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba still face an uncertain future? Once again, we join the international community in launching a sincere and urgent appeal to the Government of the United States to put an end to this anachronistic blockade that runs counter to international law.

It is in this spirit that my delegation will support the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.7, submitted by the Republic of Cuba, as it has supported corresponding draft resolutions in previous years.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): For the ninth consecutive year, the General Assembly is considering the item entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

The aim of the international sympathy and support, which increase every year, as just noted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, is to end the blockade imposed against Cuba. I wish to recall in this respect that the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations have confirmed the right of States to exercise sovereignty over their territories and to be free of interference in their internal affairs. The Millennium Declaration has also emphasized this. This requires the United Nations membership as a whole, particularly the big Powers responsible for implementing the Charter and the Declaration, as well as other international instruments, to be more respectful of the Charter, which constitutes the viable and final authority of the Organization.

Thus, we wish to recall the United Nations declaration that warned against the nefarious effects stemming from the economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations and their implications for innocent populations, and warned of the need to subject sanctions regimes to regular reviews and to remove their harmful effects. If this warning focuses on the harmful consequences of United Nations sanctions, it should necessarily apply to unilateral sanctions.

Such sanctions should not continue, because, as reflected in United Nations resolutions, those peoples, their neighbours and the peoples of the entire world reject them: they constitute unjustifiable oppression and, in particular, make it impossible to create a climate favouring development and the eradication of poverty. Respect for the Charter and for United Nations decisions is the basis of the work of the international community, and the unilateral imposition of economic and trade measures against a State and a people, and their extraterritorial implementation, compromise the freedom of the States Members of the Organization in a manner inconsistent with the Charter and with the norms governing international trade.

The four-decade-long embargo against Cuba has harmed that country economically, socially and politically. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba has just told the Assembly, it has increased the suffering of the Cuban people, especially children and the elderly. The growing concern of the international community has been expressed in General Assembly resolutions in recent years. It is high time to end this problem.

My delegation acknowledges and appreciates Cuba's willingness to engage in dialogue with a view to lifting the blockade, and we support sincere constructive dialogue with the United States of America to settle all disputes between the parties on the basis of State sovereignty, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, respect for the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and good-neighbourliness.

Let us pose this question: what is the crime of the friendly, peaceable Cuban people in freely choosing its own economic, social, political and cultural system in accordance with international norms and conventions? Should it be punished for its choice? Surely, international law says that it should not be punished. The international community's growing support for an end to the embargo against Cuba underscores the need to respect the political, economic, social and cultural system freely chosen by each country in line with its own national interests.

In that connection, we reaffirm that any decision taken by any State that would compromise the sovereignty of another State runs counter to the principle of State sovereignty. We recall also the Final Document adopted at Cartagena at the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which called upon the State imposing these sanctions to end the embargo against Cuba because it contravenes the provisions of the Charter and of international law and runs counter to the principle of good-neighbourliness.

I would refer also to the South Summit of developing countries, held at Havana, which unequivocally rejected the imposition of any law with extraterritorial effects and of other coercive economic measures. The South Summit expressed deep concern at the effects of economic sanctions on the development capacity of target States, and, on behalf of the leaders of all developing countries, it appealed for a speedy end to the embargo. The international community has repeatedly rejected the extension of the unilateral sanctions against Cuba; it has rejected the Helms-Burton Act, which goes beyond national legislation and which compromises the sovereignty of third States that deal with Cuba. That runs counter to the principle of the sovereign equality of States.

Sanctions cause enormous material damage and great economic and social harm to the civilian population of target countries and of neighbouring countries. They also violate the rules governing international trade, not to mention the will of peoples. My delegation therefore supports the draft resolution (A/55/L.7) now before the Assembly, consistent with its position in support of similar texts in previous years. We hope that United States policy, especially as we enter a new millennium, will conform to the position of the international community — as represented in the General Assembly and as reflected in last year's resolution 54/21, which earned 158 votes in favour, and in the draft resolution upon which the Assembly will soon take action — and put an end to all sanctions with harmful effects on humankind at large.

Mr. Mohammad Kamal (Malaysia): For eight years now, the General Assembly has been adopting, by overwhelming majorities, resolutions clearly signalling the international community's rejection of the unilateral embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. This year, we expect a similar, if not a stronger, rejection by the international community. That rejection was reiterated also by Ministers for Foreign Affairs of non-aligned countries at the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference, held at Cartagena on 8 and 9 April 2000. Moreover, a general decision with regard to trade-related economic measures with coercive characteristics was taken by the Group of 77 at the South Summit, held at Havana from 10 to 14 April 2000, as reflected both in the Declaration of the South Summit and in the Havana Programme of Action.

While recent developments within the United States appear to point to an emerging trend seemingly favourable to Cuba, it is clear that there remain influential elements that have yet to grasp the present international economic and political realities, which are characterized by increased globalization and interdependence in relations among States. They fail to realize that this is an age in which we demolish walls and build bridges in relations among States, and particularly between neighbours.

Malaysia remains firmly opposed to all forms of economic, commercial and financial sanctions and embargoes that run counter to the spirit and the letter of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we are particularly opposed to the continued unilateral application of the coercive economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. We fail to understand how a poor and small developing country could pose a threat to the national interests of a big and powerful country such as the United States.

Malaysia joins the call by the international community for an immediate end to the embargo on Cuba, which violates the principles of international law and of international humanitarian law. It has inflicted tremendous socio-economic damage and hardship on the people of Cuba, especially children, women, the elderly and the sick. The embargo violates the

principles of global free trade and of human rights and has had a grave humanitarian impact of the lives of ordinary Cuban people.

Malaysia once again reaffirms its commitment to respect for the fundamental principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade and navigation. In the interest of upholding these fundamental and sacrosanct principles of international law, and reaffirming Malaysia's solidarity with Cuba and its people, Malaysia will unreservedly support the draft resolution before us.

Mr. Patrício (Angola): In line with our position on the issue of the elimination of coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion, our delegation would like express our strong condemnation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba. This firm position is linked to our political and economic values and the principles of Angolan foreign trade policy, which is based on the recognized principles of the freedom of international trade and non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

Angola has always defended the right of each State and of its people to choose their own destiny and policy, and, like all people, the Cuban people have the right to trade freely with any State and to seek the best way of pursuing their development.

Since 1991, when this issue was submitted to the Assembly for consideration for the first time, Angola has always taken a clear position. Angola has voted in favour of ending the economic, trade and financial blockade against Cuba, because such a blockade has been the cause of social constraints that affect the quality of life of the Cuban people.

In the context of this situation, the Republic of Angola once again reaffirms its determination to participate in the achievement of United Nations goals, including the political settlement of disputes between Member countries, and therefore urges the parties to do everything in their power to establish a dialogue that might lead to ending the blockade, for the benefit of both the Cuban and the American people.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): Since this item was first inscribed on the agenda of the General Assembly some years ago, international support for the Assembly's resolutions on the issue has increased. No doubt this is an unequivocal manifestation of Member States' profound concern about and rejection of policies that call for the extraterritorial application of laws and unilateral measures by one State against another.

Given the fact that the overwhelming opposition of the General Assembly to the continuing imposition of the embargo has been endorsed by a growing number of public bodies that have expressed disapproval of these punitive actions, many had hoped that there would be a change in the situation. However, the growing demand of the international community for the lifting of the embargo has not been fulfilled.

Faithful to its commitment to peace, justice and equality, and as a firm believer in the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in international law, including the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, as well as freedom of international trade and navigation, Ghana reaffirms its opposition not only to the embargo but also to the extraterritorial application of national legislation, such as the Helms-Burton Act, that seeks to impose on third countries punitive measures that impede international transactions. No country should be encouraged or allowed to pursue unilateralism at the expense of fruitful international cooperation, particularly in an era of multilateralism and globalization.

The unilateral anti-Cuban legislation has gravely undermined the efforts of the Cuban people to achieve economic and social development, which has had unavoidable consequences for the living standards of the population, particularly vulnerable groups, including children, women and the elderly. Such practices are thus a flagrant violation of human rights, as they are fraught with harmful humanitarian consequences.

The use of embargoes or unilateral sanctions as a means to resolve inter-State differences has long been rejected by the international community, which favours dialogue, negotiation and arbitration. It is in this context that the Cuban Government has been calling for a dialogue to resolve its differences with the United States. We therefore appeal to the United States to respond positively to Cuba's offer to enable the two countries to enter into a new era of bilateral relations. The cooperation and understanding shown by the two Governments with regard to the unfortunate and tragic

case of Elián González should serve as a source of encouragement for direct talks about their differences.

My delegation is happy to observe that the United States Government is seeking avenues for the further easing of certain aspects of the embargo, including the recent lifting of restrictions on the export of food and medicine to Cuba. We are, however, concerned about the financial and other restrictions attached to the implementation of this policy. Furthermore, such concessions are not beneficial to efforts aimed at forging cordial bilateral relations, since they would do little for the Cuban economy because they rule out sales from Cuba to the United States. Indeed, these measures are cosmetic and do not respond to the increasing demand for a total lifting of the embargo.

Despite the hardships endured by Cubans over the years, the Government and the people of Cuba have made laudable strides in their pursuit of solidarity and internationalism. Cuba has assisted many developing countries, including my own, in the fields of medical health and education, thus contributing to the well-being and prosperity of millions of people around the world.

As we cross the threshold into the new millennium, it behoves all Member States of the United Nations to ensure that relics of the cold war are discarded from the agenda of the General Assembly through the shedding of attitudes that do not enhance trends towards international cooperation and understanding. For all these reasons, my delegation will, as in the past, support the draft resolution on this item, as introduced by the Foreign Minister of Cuba.

Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I have stepped up to this rostrum to declare our support for Cuba and for the draft resolution submitted by its delegation.

We are here before the Assembly to reassert once again our condemnation of all the coercive measures that the United States is carrying out, or might in future carry out, against other peoples of the world. The United States does not have the right to do this, because force must not be a substitute for the primacy of law. The use of force runs counter to all international instruments and standards.

The United States is seeking to impose its own formulas and categories on other countries. It wants them to be puppets and to serve its interests. The United States does not care about the interests of peoples themselves. This arrogance of power is sheer madness.

We pay tribute to the heroic people of Cuba, and have great respect for their President, Fidel Castro. Cuba is a tiny country fighting a giant one, one that is imposing conditions on it and attempting to decide what kind of regime it should have. But Cuba has been free and independent for more than 40 years and will not be subjugated. This is an example we should all follow. All the countries that believe that the United States represents the shadow of God on earth should follow in Cuba's footsteps.

The blockade against Cuba should have been terminated long ago. This would have been in accordance with the conscience of the peoples of the world, who reject Cuba's continued victimization by the United States. We are on earth by the grace of God, not by the grace of the United States. The United States cannot impose its will on anyone. Why should we be afraid of the United States? We should fear only an omnipotent God.

Some countries have attempted to oppose the United States. What has been the result? Among other things, those countries are not respected or given assistance by the United States. The United States respects only those countries that respect themselves. We must all endeavour to earn the respect of our peoples, not that of the United States.

We should value Fidel Castro. He has lived in his own country as a giant who has served his people. He does not carry out the orders of the all-powerful, and he rejects their efforts. So I say to our friends in Cuba that they are in good company — Libya, the Sudan, Iran, Iraq North Korea and other countries upon which sanctions have been imposed. We should thank the United States. Why do I say that? Because it has forced us to seek solutions to our problems and to mobilize our potential and intellectual capacity to find local solutions — solutions of our own.

Cubans are superior in education and medical services. They have no equal in the world. Some Americans go to Cuba for treatment of various illnesses. Some Canadians also have gone to Cuba from the north of the continent to receive treatment, including drug addicts. Cuba does not refuse treatment to anyone. Medical services and medicines are not given only to the Cuban people. Cuba provides

treatment for malaria, AIDS and other diseases, and it has, at its own expense, sent thousands of doctors to more than 20 African countries.

What an enormous difference this is between these two countries. One prohibits the dispatch of medicines to other countries of the world, even countries that require and purchase them, and the other country sends drugs free of charge to other countries. Which is the greater country in that case? Clearly, it is Cuba. How can we compare a country that prohibits the sale of food to other countries with a country that willingly shares its limited amounts of food with others?

About two weeks ago, President Castro showed us a map indicating where Cuban doctors and medicines can be found. They are being used in forests, villages and jungles to help the people who need them. Libya, Cuba, Nigeria, and, more recently, Iran, following its head of State's visit to Havana, all have contributed to the formulation of an expanded programme to provide all necessary treatments for our brothers in the African continent.

Who is providing these services? The countries that are suffering from blockades — Libya, Cuba and Iran. Which is the greater country? A great country is one that voluntarily provides services and assistance to other countries. A country that imposes food and medicine blockades on other countries should not be called a great country.

We are told that Cuba is not democratic and should emulate the United States democratic system. But consider the Florida scandal we are witnessing here in the United States. We can see from the elections that we are the democracies, not the ridiculous, farcical model of the United States.

A draft resolution on multilateralism was introduced by the United States together with other sponsors, at one of the United Nations Commissions, and they want us to adopt it. Again, there is the example of Florida, which they want to propagate around the world. If one is shameless, one does whatever one likes. That is how they want the world to be.

Cuba wants to feel confident, as it always has. As was stated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, if the United States expects the second and third generations and other generations of Cubans to be its puppets, then it is mistaken. The Minister for Foreign Affairs himself is a second- or third-generation Cuban and has the principal responsibility for the youth of Cuba. The young people of Cuba realize that freedom costs a great deal and that their independence does not depend on anything that they can receive from the United States.

What does the United States give to the peoples of the world? All it gives is superficial and superfluous things. Does the United States work in the interest of other countries and other peoples, even through its investments? The United States invests only if there is a yield and profit for the United States. The United States takes; it does not give.

We have condemned the United States, but it is not we and our words that condemn the United States the most, but rather that country's own acts, practices and positions. The United States invaded Grenada, launched attacks on the President of Cuba and conducted night raids against towns and villages in Libya. What was the purpose of these insane acts?

Libya and other countries of the world want the United States to hear the voice of reason. Even if the United States says that it has modified and amended the law, we do not need its wheat or its medicines. We will buy these things from countries that respect us and serve our interests and that respect our independence and freedoms. We are not going to buy wheat and medicines from countries that have been forced by the United States to open their markets to United States products. This is not the way to conduct relations among States. When we need food and medicine, we will buy them from countries that respect our independence, liberty and sovereignty. We have free trade with those countries, and our relations with them are marked by mutual respect. This approach must become universal in order to oppose force and to teach future generations that Cuba will remain independent and sovereign.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Allow me to welcome the Foreign Minister of Cuba this morning. My delegation believes that it is very significant that the Foreign Minister of Cuba was able to find time in his busy schedule to be among us. His presence, however, is appropriate, because today we are addressing the plight of the Cuban people.

For more than 40 years, the people of Cuba have suffered from a relentless and unilateral embargo. The

tragedy of this unilateral embargo is that it continues to cause untold suffering to the Cuban civilian population. It is the ordinary people who bear the brunt of this injustice — the ordinary men, women and children whose daily lives in Cuba have been affected by policies beyond their control. It is therefore no wonder that the overwhelming majority of Member States present this morning are here to rally in support of the draft resolution before us.

South Africa views the continued imposition of an economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba as a flagrant violation of the principle of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs. We are guided by these basic norms of international conduct in our principled support for the need to eliminate coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion.

At the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Cartagena this April, a call was made to the Government of the United States

> "to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which, in addition to being unilateral and contrary to the United Nations Charter and international law, and to the principle of neighbourliness, caused huge material losses and economic damage to the people of Cuba".

The ministers further expressed

> "their deep concern over the widening of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo against Cuba and over continuous new legislative measures geared to intensifying it".

My delegation reiterates the sentiment expressed at the Non-Aligned Movement ministerial summit and calls upon all countries to reject the unilateral extraterritorial imposition of sanctions, because they stand in stark contrast to international laws that guide all civilized States. The United Nations Charter is an embodiment of the vision, mission, principles and obligations that all signatories to the Charter have to abide by. They specifically include the equality of all Member States and non-intervention and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other States. Freedom to trade internationally is an integral part of many international legal instruments.

In line with previous United Nations resolutions on this item, among others, South Africa believes that constructive dialogue can foster mutual trust and understanding as well as engender harmony and peaceful coexistence between the two nations. South Africa will once again support the draft resolution to be considered by the General Assembly under this item. This, we believe, is the least we can do for the Cuban people.

The President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to propose, if there is no objection, that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed now.

It was so decided.

Mr. Arcaya (Venezuela) *(spoke in Spanish)*: The Millennium Summit reaffirmed that the multilateralism represented in the United Nations constitutes one of the most suitable means for finding solutions to problems of common interest requiring collective responses based on international dialogue and cooperation.

However, we note with concern that on quite a few occasions these trends towards dialogue and understanding have been obstructed by the application of unilateral measures with extraterritorial effects, such as the Helms-Burton Act. These are at variance with the principles and norms of international law and peaceful coexistence among nations.

For this reason, we support the consideration of this item by the General Assembly. It is of particular importance, owing to the negative consequences of such measures on the international political, economic and legal order.

Against the background of growing economic interdependence, which is gradually being consolidated, the application of such measures contradicts the signs of our times, in which free access to markets, goods and services, based on clear rules and the consolidation of the processes of integration, are central elements in the ongoing globalization process.

From this standpoint, Venezuela reiterates its rejection of the application of unilateral measures such as the Helms-Burton Act, for such measures infringe the sovereignty of States and affect the legitimate interests of entities or citizens under the jurisdiction of third countries and undermine the rules of trade

embodied in the charter of the World Trade Organization.

Accordingly, our country endorses the statements on this topic adopted by the Organization of American States, the Rio Group, the Non-Aligned Movement and, more recently, by the Summit of the Group of 77.

In this context, we believe that the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba is at variance with international law and the principle of self-determination, and runs counter to the legitimate aspiration of peoples to achieve full human development. We cherish the hope that an end will be put to these measures, which, from any standpoint, fall outside international legality and the necessary understanding among countries.

For these reasons, Venezuela will vote in favour of draft resolution A/55/L.7, which is under consideration by this Assembly.

Finally, we thank the Secretary-General for the report prepared on this item, which has been issued as document A/55/172 and Add.1.

Mr. Lewis (Antigua and Barbuda): I am speaking on behalf of the countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). As in previous years, CARICOM States express their opposition to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. We firmly believe that the principles of international law and freedom of trade and navigation should be respected. For our part, we maintain no legislation or measure that would impinge on the sovereignty of any State and the legitimate interest of its nationals.

Member States of the Caribbean Community, in keeping with our policy of mutual respect, good-neighbourliness and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter, have sought collectively and individually to strengthen links with Cuba in an attempt to promote Cuba's gradual economic integration into the subregion through functional cooperation and trade.

We therefore remain opposed to the perpetuation of policies that give rise to continued tension in the Caribbean and that impose artificial barriers to trade and cooperation in the region. We would like to see progress in the establishment of a regime of peace and cooperation in the Caribbean Sea, and to this end we urge both parties to engage in an constructive process of dialogue to bring an end to policies of confrontation and exclusion, with a view to normalizing relations.

Accordingly, we support the elements of the draft resolution that is before the Assembly, and we will vote in favour of its adoption.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): For the ninth consecutive year, the overwhelming majority of States are voting in favour of lifting the embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. The international community is calling on the United States to respect the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, including the right of countries to exercise sovereignty over their own territory and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries. For the ninth consecutive year, the United States is displaying its disrespect and scorn for the entire international community by perpetuating the 40-year comprehensive embargo against Cuba.

The United States embargo of Cuba has caused a humanitarian disaster in that beautiful and peaceable country. The blockade has seriously hampered economic and social development there and caused the unjustifiable suffering of millions of Cubans. It has, of course, hindered Cuba's trade, not to mention its harmful effects on third parties that trade with Cuba. It violates the fundamental rights of the Cuban people, inter alia, their right to life. It is organized genocide that should entail the punishment of its perpetrators under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Cuban people have a right to compensation for the damage caused by this illegal blockade, which has been accompanied by continued attempts by the United States to interfere in Cuba's internal affairs and to organize, encourage and finance acts of sabotage against that country and its people in an effort to bring down its society and its political system.

It is ironic that the United States should claim to act on behalf of democracy in committing such acts. In seeking to reverse the Cuban revolution against the dictator Batista, the United States merely wishes to install a similar regime, as it is most certainly doing elsewhere in the world where it supports the most despotic and primitive Governments.

The United States blockade of Cuba and interference in its internal affairs are eloquent examples of the policy of hegemony and force pursued by the United States in its international relations. The

United States is currently applying unilateral sanctions against more than 70 countries, not to mention those imposed through the Security Council, including the global sanctions against Iraq. Such sanctions are tantamount to crimes against humanity, victimizing 1.5 million Iraqis, most of them women and children. The United States cold-bloodedly continues to kill Iraqi children, despite the reports of human rights organizations that the sanctions are illegal under international humanitarian law and run counter to international human rights law. They are a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter, specifically paragraphs 1 and 2 of Chapter I and paragraph (c) of Article 55.

We urge the United States to revise this policy radically and appeal to its sense of law and justice. We call on the United States to lift its inhumane blockade of the Cuban and other peoples and hope that draft resolution A/55/L.7 before us today will be the last such appeal for an end to this policy of intimidation, starvation and arrogant interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

Mr. Musambachine (Zambia): Allow me to welcome the presence of the Foreign Minister of Cuba at this meeting. My delegation is extremely thankful that the Minister was able to find time in his busy schedule to be with us today. His presence is appropriate, because we are addressing the plight and the suffering endured by the Cuban people for the past 40 years. My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement he made before this Assembly.

In the same breath, my delegation wishes to commend the Secretary-General for his report, contained in documents A/55/172 and Add.1, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". My delegation equally commends the Cuban delegation for introducing draft resolution A/55/L.7.

For the eight consecutive years that the General Assembly has adopted the resolution on this item, Zambia has always voted in favour. We are, again at this session, going to vote in favour of the draft resolution before us. Our decision to vote in favour is based on our firm belief in the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Zambia believes that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba is a breach of international law and a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter. The extraterritorial provisions of the Helms-Burton and D'Amato legislation infringe on the territorial integrity of other States. They also impede international navigation and free trade, as embodied in the World Trade Organization Final Act.

My Government is concerned about the adverse effects the embargo has on the Cuban people, especially the vulnerable groups, such as children, women and the elderly. It is because of the seriousness of the situation that the General Assembly has been steadfast in adopting resolutions demanding the lifting of this unnecessary embargo on Cuba. The Republic of Zambia totally rejects the extraterritorial application of national laws, such as the Helms-Burton Act, because such laws disregard the principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

Zambia's foreign policy is based, among other things, on the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference and the peaceful coexistence of States. In this context, I would like to state that Zambia has neither enacted nor applied domestic laws towards any State that have extraterritorial jurisdiction. Zambia will always fulfil in good faith the obligations it assumes in international agreements and conventions.

Being both a landlocked and a transit country, Zambia is better placed to appreciate the importance of promoting freedom of navigation and trade. Zambia has consistently reaffirmed the right of access of both landlocked and transit States to and from the sea by all means of transportation, in accordance with international law. The Republic of Zambia is also committed to the development of rule-based trade with all countries of the world.

With the end of the cold war, the international community was optimistic that there would be a resolution of these questions. However, it is regrettable that conditions that dictated its existence are still very prevalent. Today we are concerned at the attempts to condition and even erode the principles of friendly and cooperative relations between States.

It is because of our firm belief in the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations that my delegation once again calls for the complete lifting, without conditions, of the embargo on Cuba. We are pleased to note that our relations with Cuba are based on mutual respect and on the principle of non-

interference in each other's affairs. These values should be the foundations on which healthy relations between States are based and built.

Mr. Apata (Nigeria): The Group of 77 leaders, at their maiden Summit in Havana last April, unequivocally called for the end of the economic embargo on Cuba. It is therefore an honour, and indeed a privilege, for me to carry out the important mandate of speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 35 in support of draft resolution A/55/L.7, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

We have read the report of the Secretary-General on this item. It is instructive to conclude from it that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba is a unilateral action, whose extraterritorial effects have no validity in public international law. It is highly necessary that the embargo be lifted immediately to allow a free flow of international trade.

The South Summit was aware that national laws lack extraterritorial applicability. Both the Declaration of the South Summit and the Havana Programme of Action, which our leaders adopted at the Summit, are now part of the documentation of the Millennium Assembly. I should like to quote some relevant sections from the Programme of Action:

> "In the spirit of fostering North-South relations we underline the necessity for developed countries to eliminate laws and regulations with adverse extraterritorial effects and other forms of unilateral economic coercive measures, inconsistent with the principles of international law, United Nations Charter and the principles of the multilateral trading system.
>
> "We also express our grave concern over the impact of economic sanctions on the civilian population and development capacity in targeted countries and therefore urge the international community to exhaust all peaceful methods before resorting to sanctions, which should only be considered as a last resort. If necessary these sanctions must be established only in strict conformity with the Charter of the United Nations with clear objectives, clear time frame, provision for regular review, precise conditions for their lifting and never be used as a form of punishment or otherwise exact retribution." (*A/55/74, annex, paras. 10 and 11*)

I should like to conclude by quoting the appeal issued in Havana by the countries of the South Summit on this issue, as it aptly focuses on the problem:

> "We, the Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China, assembled here in Havana for the historic First South Summit, consider it our moral and fraternal duty to address a sincere appeal to the Government of the United States of America to immediately lift the economic embargo imposed on the Republic of Cuba since 1960.
>
> "We also believe that the economic embargo, which has lasted too long, serves no other purpose than to preserve tension between two neighbouring countries and impose untold hardship and suffering on the people of Cuba, especially women and children.
>
> "We are convinced that the replacement of the embargo with greater dialogue and co-operation will contribute greatly not only towards the removal of tension between them but also promote meaningful exchange and partnership between two countries whose destinies are linked by history and geography.
>
> "We, therefore, urge the United States Government to show magnanimity by responding positively to this appeal."

It is an honour on behalf of our Group to support the draft resolution.

Mr. Fedortchenko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today we are considering a very important item that goes far beyond the framework of relations between two countries, the United States and Cuba, and affects basic principles of the whole system of international relations. For eight consecutive years the General Assembly has been considering the issue of the "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba." This alone is convincing proof of increasing opposition by the world community to such unilateral measures, which impede the formulation of a world legal order based on the principles of international legality and justice.

Together with other States, Russia has repeatedly expressed its disagreement with the efforts by certain circles in the United States to tighten the sanctions regime against Cuba and to exert pressure on third countries and certain international organizations to force them to curtail their cooperation with Cuba. This clearly runs contrary to the norms of international law and the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Russia fully reaffirms its commitment to resolution 2625 (XXV), adopted by the General Assembly on 24 October 1970, entitled "Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations". The Declaration states that no State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measure to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights and to secure from it advantages of any kind.

We support the appeal to all States to refrain from adopting or applying such unilateral coercive measures in circumvention of the Security Council. We also urge States having such legislation and continuing to apply it to take the necessary steps to repeal or terminate it as soon as possible, in accordance with their constitutional procedures.

Russia regards the steps taken recently by the United States Administration to step up humanitarian contacts with Cuba, partially freeing deliveries of medicines and foodstuffs and expanding the geographical area for charter flights between the two countries, as moves in the right direction.

We hope that these measures, although very limited and selective in nature, along with the United States Administration's decision to reunite with his father the six-year-old Cuban boy Elián González, who, by force of circumstances, came to be in United States territory, will mark the beginning of constructive reconsideration by the United States of its policy towards Cuba in the interests of normalizing United States-Cuban relations and improving the overall situation in the region.

For its part, Russia, firmly guided by the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade and navigation, reaffirms its intention to further develop normal trade and economic relations with Cuba. These relations are based on common interests and mutual benefits and are being carried out in strict accordance with the United Charter and the universally recognized principles and norms of international law without any discrimination and without detriment to the legitimate rights and interests of the parties.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me at the very outset to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report presented to the General Assembly under this agenda item. It represents a valuable compilation of the views of a wide range of Governments and organs and agencies of the United Nations system. The emphasis of the report on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as clearly indicated in the introduction, is a welcome beginning and lies at the heart of the whole matter.

The views of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba and on the need to end it are known to the Assembly and, for our immediate purpose, are included in the report under consideration. However, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight the major thrust of our views and to draw attention to the major issues involved. The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba contravenes all laws and principles governing international relations, the provisions of the United Nations Charter and laws governing international trade and related conventions. All of us in the General Assembly, irrespective of whatever differences we might have on other issues and questions, seem to agree, as a matter of principle, that the promotion of international cooperation and friendly relations among States and the strengthening of commitments to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law constitute the most basic and fundamental purpose of the creation of this world Organization. It hardly needs to be emphasized that respect for the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and the peaceful settlement of disputes have been among the major objectives of the United Nations. Moreover, more than ever before, the international community has come to the realization that common efforts to resolve

tensions and the promotion of friendly relations among States, at both the regional and global levels, are imperative for the maintenance of peace and security and the achievement of development. The final outcome of the Millennium Summit, fresh as it is, should serve as a vivid reminder to all of us in this regard.

Within the overall global framework geared to the promotion of an international environment conducive to strengthening constructive dialogue and genuine partnership, recourse to unilateral coercive economic measures represents an anomaly, and hence is unacceptable to the international community. The principles and norms of international law against such practices are enormous indeed, including, inter alia, those of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of their Independence and Sovereignty, and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States. It is also a matter of regret and concern that such practices not only have not diminished over time, but rather, have been on the rise. There is little disagreement within the international community that such policies and measures constitute major impediments to the freedom of trade and finance, limit the access of countries to financial resources and thus hamper the achievement of economic cooperation and development at different levels. It is exactly because of this negative impact that it is incumbent upon all countries to refrain from recourse to such measures and actions.

On a related point, it is imperative that the international community should reject the promulgation and application of unilateral actions and laws and regulations whose extraterritorial impact adversely affects the sovereignty and economic, commercial and financial interests of other States, as well as the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction. Over and above their negative impact on economic cooperation and development, such measures and actions also adversely affect the social and humanitarian activities of the targeted country and consequently hinder the full realization of the human rights of the targeted people.

As the Assembly is fully aware, in almost a United Nations resolutions and decisions on financi and commercial issues and related final declaratio and conclusions of high-level meetings of the ent United Nations system, the critical need for equitable, secure, non-discriminatory and predictab multilateral trading system has been emphasized. T need for a favourable and conducive internation economic and financial environment and a positi investment climate, that facilitate meaningf integration of the developing countries in internation trade and financial systems, has also been endorsed consensus by the Assembly year after year.

These collective decisions and declarations hav among others, also requested all countries to abolish measures that could impede free international trade a financial transactions. In a number of high-lev meetings within the United Nations, Member Stat have reaffirmed and renewed their commitments uphold and strengthen the multilateral trading syste for the economic and social advancement of countries and peoples. Having made this point, I wou also like to draw the attention of this body to anoth cardinal principle governing the relations among Stat and constitution of the international community.

We all have to respect the principle that it is undeniable right of every State to choose its politica economic, social and cultural system witho interference in any form by another State. Since t ultimate objective of recourse to unilateral coerci measures is to create political and economic difficulti and instability in the targeted countries, the Islam Republic of Iran, like other members of t international community, advocates the removal a elimination of all economic and trade embargo imposed against Cuba and believes that the differenc between States should be settled in a peaceful manner.

In this connection, as the Assembly is aware, t heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 a China at their historic first South Summit, held la April in Havana, called upon and made an appeal f the immediate abolition of the economic embar imposed on the Republic of Cuba since 1960.

Cognizant of the economic, social and financi difficulties the Cuban nation has been facing as a resu of the embargo, my delegation, like other members the Group of 77, believes that the economic embarg serves no other purpose than to preserve tensi

between the two neighbouring countries, and it would like to extend its support, once again, to any step that the General Assembly may wish to take to resolve the issue under consideration through peaceful means and on the basis of the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution on this agenda item.

Mr. Urib (Namibia): I rise to speak this morning on agenda item 33, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". My Government's position on the subject is well known, but I would like to reiterate Namibia's opposition — strong opposition, I might add — to the continued extraterritorial extension of the commercial and financial embargo imposed by the Government of the United States of America on the people of Cuba since 1960.

Namibia has, in the past, repeatedly advocated an end to this economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, for we firmly believe that the Helms-Burton Act and the D'Amato legislation are breaches of international law and a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter. Moreover, these measures are contrary to peaceful coexistence and cooperation among nations and run counter to free international trade, especially in this era of globalization. I therefore reiterate Namibia's call on the Government of the United States of America to immediately lift this economic embargo against Cuba.

The embargo continues to severely undermine the economic and social development of Cuba and its people. As a consequence of this embargo, Cuba finds it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to purchase needed food, medicine, fuel and raw materials, all of which are necessary to sustain the lives of the Cuban people. The world cannot and must not remain an idle witness to this gross injustice, which inflicts untold suffering on the Cuban people, especially women and children. In this respect, Namibia is pleased that the international community has time and again rejected this hostile policy by the most powerful nation against a small developing country.

In this context, the Group of 77 and China, at its South Summit held in Havana, Cuba, in April 2000, launched an appeal to the United States of America calling on it to immediately lift the economic embargo imposed on Cuba. They stressed in that appeal their conviction

> "that the replacement of the embargo with greater dialogue and cooperation will contribute greatly not only towards the removal of tension between them but also promote meaningful exchange and partnership between the two countries whose destinies are linked by history and geography".

Namibia enjoys excellent bilateral relations with both the United States of America and Cuba. We therefore believe that the immediate lifting of this embargo will not only benefit the people of Cuba, but the United States as well. For all these reasons, Namibia will, once again, vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.7, which was introduced earlier by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Felipe Perez Roque. We congratulate him, his Government and the people of Cuba for their courage and steadfastness in the face of these enormous difficulties.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): For eight consecutive years, the General Assembly has adopted a resolution reaffirming the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of countries and freedom in international trade and navigation, appealing to all countries to implement their commitments under the Charter and international law and avoid formulating and implementing laws and measures that run counter to the above-mentioned principles. This is a just call on the part of the international community, which deserves to be heeded and implemented by the country concerned.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba has lasted for decades and has caused enormous difficulties for the Cuban people in their efforts to achieve economic and social development. It has seriously affected efforts made by the Cuban Government in eradicating poverty and improving people's living standards and has seriously harmed the health and welfare of women and children. This is a violation of their human rights.

Laws with extraterritorial effects implemented to enforce the embargo have also adversely affected normal economic and commercial relations between Cuba and other countries, and thereby has seriously

jeopardized their legitimate rights and interests. This is a matter of serious concern to us. The Chinese Government always believes that countries have the right to choose their social systems, ideologies and paths to development according to their own circumstances. No other country has the right to interfere in this regard.

Recourse to unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargoes aimed at forcing other countries to abandon their independent development choices and indeed at subverting their Governments is in violation of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and of the norms governing international relations. It should therefore be condemned by the international community.

For many consecutive years, the General Assembly, by great majorities, has adopted resolution after resolution calling on all States to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and international law, urging States not to apply laws and measures that threaten the legitimate rights and interests of other countries, and urging States that continue to apply such laws and measures to take the necessary steps to repeal or invalidate them.

It is regrettable that, contrary to the will of the international community, the United States stubbornly persists in failing to abandon its practices. It is clear from replies that the Secretary-General has received from Governments and from statements by Member States on this item that the international community earnestly hopes that the country concerned will abandon the obsolete practice of imposing economic blockades, will turn to engagement rather than isolation and dialogue rather than confrontation, and will settle its disputes with other countries through constructive dialogue and negotiations.

We note that the United States recently eased the embargo against Cuba with respect to medicine and food. But, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba has observed, even though the United States has taken limited steps to ease the embargo, on the whole it remains in place.

To put an early end to the suffering of the Cuban people and to enable normal economic and commercial exchanges between Cuba and other countries to proceed without interference, the international community must pursue its efforts in this regard. We hope that the United States will go along with the historical trend and abandon its cold-war mentality, implement the relevant United Nations resolutions and completely lift its economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba at an early date.

The Chinese delegation supports the draft resolution before the Assembly in document A/55/L.7.

Mr. Jokonya (Zimbabwe): I wish at the outset to acknowledge the presence in the Assembly Hall of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Felipe Pérez Roque.

While we welcome the opportunity to address the problematic question before the Assembly, we regret that all our past efforts, including numerous General Assembly resolutions, have not succeeded in putting this problem behind us. As a friend of Cuba and as a country that strongly adheres to international law, Zimbabwe regrets that, before the very eyes of the entire international community, the people of Cuba have been suffering for more than 30 years under a unilaterally imposed embargo which runs counter to the principles and purposes of the United Nations. Zimbabwe would take the same position were any unilateral measures imposed against the United States, or any other country for that matter.

The extraterritorial tentacles of the embargo seek to punish Cuba's friends and trading partners for coming to the aid of that small island country or for seeking business opportunities there. Surely, the international community must not stand by while the very foundations and pillars of international cooperation and multilateralism are undermined. Each time the international community closes its eyes to the trampling of fundamental principles and tenets of international law, it demeans, dehumanizes and makes a mockery of the Charter of the United Nations. The international community should roundly reject this kind — and this specific case — of imposition.

Furthermore, we believe that this body has the prerogative not only to come to the aid of victimized countries but also to defend the principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity, which are enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Like all those who spoke before it, Zimbabwe will today vote in favour of draft resolution A/55/L.7 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. We trust that others will do the

same so that we can give the draft resolution the resounding support it deserves. That is in line with the principles that bring us together, as sovereign States, in this Organization.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/55/L.7. Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us in document A/55/L.7, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba. Costa Rica condemns the unjust unilateral imposition of economic measures against the Cuban people. The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba and the so-called Helms-Burton Act clearly violate public international law and run counter to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

My delegation considers that all sanctions regimes must be approved by the international community as a whole, through authoritative, representative multilateral organs. We therefore reject the unilateral imposition of sanctions and the extraterritorial application of national legislation in violation of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

The Government of Costa Rica regrets the social, political and economic damage that the blockade has caused among the Cuban people. It has without question harmed the health and nutritional status of the Cuban people by preventing the import of medicine, food and medical supplies and equipment. We regret also that these measures have for more than 40 years hampered Cuba's economic growth, condemning it to irremediable underdevelopment. Costa Rica is convinced that lifting the embargo against Cuba would be the best way to promote dialogue, freedom of trade and communication and the socio-economic well-being of the Cuban people.

We believe that it is essential that Cuba be fully integrated into global markets so that it can achieve greater development for the benefit of its people.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on the draft resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — the associated countries, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union believes that United States trade policy towards Cuba is essentially a bilateral matter. However, the European Union has also made clear its opposition to the extraterritorial extension of the embargo imposed by the United States of America, as provided for in the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act and the 1996 Helms-Burton Act. I should like in particular to recall that in November 1996 the Council of Ministers of the European Union adopted a Regulation and a Joint Action to protect the interests of natural or legal persons under the jurisdiction of the European Union against the extraterritorial effects of the Helms-Burton Act. Those European provisions are designed to prevent compliance within the Union with that United States legislation.

On 18 May 1998, at a summit held in London, the European Union and the United States agreed on a package of measures, including waivers in respect of Titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act, a commitment by the United States Government not to adopt such extraterritorial legislation in future and an Understanding with Respect to Disciplines for the Strengthening of Investment Protection. The European Union regrets that the United States Government has not yet fulfilled those commitments. We call on the United States Government to do so, since in our view that would represent an important step towards resolving the dispute.

I should also like to recall the European Union Common Position of 2 December 1996, and reaffirm that the Union's main objective in its relations with Cuba is to encourage a process of gradual, peaceful transition to a pluralistic democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as to economic recovery and an improvement in the living standards of the Cuban people. In this connection, the

European Union recognizes that some progress has been made in recent years, but continues to be concerned about the economic and political situation in Cuba. It therefore hopes that there will be a lasting, substantial improvement in the situation, particularly with regard to full respect for human rights.

The European Union emphasizes the responsibility of the Cuban authorities regarding human rights, such as civil and political rights, and in this regard urges them to liberate and fully integrate into society all prisoners of conscience. We appeal to the Cuban authorities to cooperate fully with international human rights bodies and mechanisms.

The European Union is pleased to note that Cuba has continued to be very active in various international and regional forums. The Union recognizes that steps have been taken by the Cuban Government to improve its economic integration within the region. The Union points to the need for the progressive and irreversible opening up of the Cuban economy to the outside world. It reiterates its wish to be Cuba's partner in such a process.

In conclusion, the European Union notes with concern the findings of United Nations agencies and programmes on the ground and deplores the adverse and often tragic effects of the United States economic embargo on the Cuban population, in particular women and children.

For all these reasons, the European Union countries will unanimously vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): The United States opposes this ill-advised draft resolution. The decision of the United States to maintain a trade embargo against the Government of Cuba is strictly a matter of bilateral trade policy and not a matter appropriate for consideration in or by the General Assembly. The contention implicit in the draft resolution that the United States forbids others from trading with Cuba is simply wrong. Sovereign States themselves decide with which other States they will trade. Because of the repressive policies and action of the Castro Government itself, the United States chooses not to trade with the Cuban Government.

The United States imposed and maintains a bilateral economic trade embargo as one element of a policy of promoting democracy in Cuba. While maintaining the bilateral trade embargo, the Clinton Administration has moved to expand dramatically people-to-people contacts with the Cuban population, to increase remittances and to help foster the growth of non-governmental organizations that are truly independent of the Government of Cuba. In late October, President Clinton signed into law a bill which allows the sale of food to Cuba.

The American people have been extremely generous in providing humanitarian assistance to Cuba. It is estimated that nearly $1 billion in direct cash remittances and $350 million in humanitarian donations were passed from United States persons to Cubans last year. This is a significant figure in a country with an estimated yearly gross domestic product of $12 billion. The goal of this policy is to foster a transition to a democratic form of Government, to protect human rights, to help develop a thriving civil society and to provide for the economic prosperity that the Cuban Government's disastrous economic policies are denying the Cuban people.

The Cuban authorities argue that the human rights of the Cuban people – or, rather, the lack thereof – are a concern for them alone. My Government disagrees. Our fundamental premise, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is that human rights violations in any one State are of concern to the entire international community. This observation is particularly relevant following yet another crackdown by the Cuban secret police, which resulted in the detention without charges of over 50 individuals whose only crime is opposition to the despotic Cuban regime.

The focus of the international community, as manifested in the United Nations, should be on the continuing human rights crisis in Cuba, rather than on bilateral aspects of United States efforts to facilitate a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba. The draft resolution serves only to distract the attention of the international community; worse, it may encourage the Cuban authorities to persist in their tragically misguided policies.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting. The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.7.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, United States of America

Abstaining:

El Salvador, Latvia, Morocco, Nicaragua

Draft resolution A/55/L.7 was adopted by 167 votes to 3, with 4 abstentions (resolution 55/20).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Moura (Brazil) *(spoke in Spanish)*: My delegation has the honour to speak on behalf of the countries of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil — and the two associated countries, Bolivia and Chile. As in previous years, we have voted for the resolution that the Assembly has just approved.

Disputes between States should be resolved by peaceful means. Coercive measures such as sanctions or blockades constitute exceptions to this general rule. Such measures should be used only when all other methods have been exhausted, and in any event should be based firmly on international law. The extraterritorial application of domestic legislation runs counter to the need to promote dialogue and to guarantee the primacy of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Sanctions and blockades which are at variance with international law exacerbate tensions. If they affect the interests of third States, as they do in this case, the international community has even more reason for concern. In addition to being rejected by the General Assembly, the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America has been rejected in a series of international forums, such as the Organization of American States, the Rio Group, the Ibero-American Summit, and the Latin American Economic System. Nor does the blockade accord with the legal obligations of the members of the World Trade Organization.

The MERCOSUR countries and associated countries add their voice to the near-unanimous one of the international community in rejecting these unilateral measures. Beyond the legal aspects, we do not believe that these measures can contribute to the full reintegration of Cuba into the inter-American system.

Mr. Hørringstad (Norway): The Norwegian Government believes that there is a clear distinction between unilateral measures and sanctions adopted by the international community through the United Nations.

In our view, no country should impose its legislation on third countries. Norway has therefore also this year voted in favour of the resolution just adopted.

This does not mean that Norway would not like to see some changes in the attitude in Cuba to human rights. We do not, however, consider isolation through unilateral measures such as the embargo under discussion to be an appropriate response to the situation and developments in Cuba. Norway believes that more can be achieved through constructive dialogue in which no subject is excluded. We have been engaged in such a dialogue over the last few years, a dialogue that focuses on human rights, and we would like to continue that dialogue.

Mr. Kitagawa (Japan): Japan shares the concern expressed by many delegations today regarding the extraterritorial application of jurisdiction such as that arising from the United States Helms-Burton Act.

My Government has been closely following the implementation of the resolution as well as the circumstances surrounding it, and its concerns remain unchanged. For this reason, my delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/55/L.7.

While Japan supports the draft resolution, it has some questions as to whether the General Assembly is in fact the most suitable forum to address the very complex issue of the United States embargo against Cuba. Japan believes that it would be desirable for both countries to seek a solution through bilateral dialogue and thus calls on them to strengthen efforts towards that end.

I should like to take this opportunity to refer to the human rights situation in Cuba. Political activities and the freedom of assembly, association and expression continue to be restricted, and fundamental progress towards democratization or ensuring respect for individual rights is hardly in evidence. Japan remains concerned at the current situation and continues to strongly hope that it will be improved.

Mr. Duval (Canada): Canada opposes the United States economic embargo of Cuba as a unilateral measure, the extraterritorial effects of which are unacceptable under international law. Further, the embargo has had severe humanitarian consequences for the civilian population of Cuba. For these reasons, Canada voted in favour of the resolution before the Assembly today.

In doing so, Canada wishes to reaffirm its position that the Cuban Government itself must deal with its own responsibility for the difficult circumstances being experienced by its people.

Mr. Stuart (Australia): Australia has voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.7. Australia shares concerns about the state of human rights and political freedoms in Cuba, but we do not consider that isolating Cuba through economic sanctions is an effective means of achieving human rights and political reform.

Australia has consistently expressed its opposition, as a matter of principle, to the promulgation and application by States Members of the United Nations of laws and measures whose extraterritorial effects affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction, as well as the freedom of trade and navigation.

In Australia's view, such laws and measures are not justified by the principles of international law and comity. Australia is concerned about the unilateral extraterritorial aspects of the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, which codifies and broadens the embargo by targeting foreign investors in Cuba.

For these reasons, Australia has again voted in favour of the resolution submitted under this item.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 35?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to announce the following additions to the programme of work.

On Tuesday morning, 14 November 2000, the General Assembly will take up as its second item agenda item 18, "Implementation of the Declaration on

the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples". Under that agenda item, the Assembly will take action on draft decision A/55/L.4.

On Tuesday morning, 28 November 2000, the General Assembly will take up agenda item 47, "Assistance in mine action". The list of speakers for agenda item 47 is now open.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.